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ABSTRACT

To determine the ratio between the number of students who had been specifically trained in methods of effective study to the number of students who had not been trained, a questionnaire was administered to 438 first-semester summer students at College of the Mainland, Texas City, Texas. The results of the survey showed the ratio to be 1 student trained in effective study to 3.09 students not trained. It is recommended that a special, optional, noncredit experimental course in "Effective Study Methods" be designed and offered, that entering students who have not had training in effective study be given the option to attend the course, and that records of students who have attended the course be maintained for comparison with records of those who have not attended. A copy of the questionnaire is provided, and a table of the survey responses and results is included. (DB)

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...BUT DO THEY KNOW HOW TO STUDY?

SOCIETAL FACTORS

CORE MODULE

By

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A PRACTICUM REPORT

PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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LIST OF TABLES

TABLE PAGE

I. Summary of Responses and Results 30

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ILLUSTRATION	PAGE
I. The Questionnaire (Side 1)	28
II. The Questionnaire (Side 2)	29

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES iii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS iv

CHAPTER PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION 1

Introduction 1

II. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE 2

Background 2

Significance 12

III. PROCEDURES 15

Procedures 15

IV. RESULTS 18

Results 18

V. RECOMMENDATIONS 19

Recommendations 19

BIBLIOGRAPHY 21

APPENDIX 27

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction. Societal factors are roughly defined as conditions which affect or pertain to the structure, organization or functioning of society.

Applied to pedagogics, they are factors which affect the educational society.

Considerable experimental evidence is documented in this report to substantiate the theory that achievement, as the prime function of the educational experience, is affected by the degree of knowledge and application of effective study skills.

It is the primary purpose of this practicum report to establish what ratio existed between the number of students who attended the first summer semester of 1974 at College of the Mainland, Texas City, Texas and had ever been taught how to study effectively, in specific terms, and the number of those students who attended, but had never been taught to study effectively.

CHAPTER II.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Background. In 1900, formal writing of observations on the study habits of students was appearing in books addressed to the educational community of the day.[1]

This is not to infer that concern over inadequate student study habits originated in that year. Far from it. About 343 B.C., Aristotle is purported to have admonished an over-eager professional soldier, who wanted an "immediate education" that there is no royal road to knowledge.

Poor study habits have possibly slowed progress as much as any other single factor which can be controlled and improved upon by each individual student.

Indeed, the background of books since 1900 on "How to Study", or some variation on that important subject reads like a "Who's Who in Twentieth Century Education". A partial chronology follows. McMurry's work in 1909; Colvin in 1922; Lyman in 1924; Fenton's book on self-direction in 1927; Crawford's techniques in 1928; Bird's first book on effective study habits in 1931, and Blackhurst in 1932 were addressed both to methods of study and observations of the

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[1]Robert A. Carman, Study Skills, (New York: American Book Co., 1900).

lack of study skills at a time when most people were more aware of the Great Depression's effects on their personal economy than on education.

In 1935, Cole and Ferguson wrote, "There seems no doubt that the successful student differs from the unsuccessful one of the same degree of natural ability in only a few of his study habits."[2]

Crawley wrote of efficient study methods in 1936. Brink was concerned about "directed" study activities in secondary schools in 1937.

It was during 1937 that Arthur W. Kornhauser's revised book for high school and college students set forth a basic educational precept, "...two aims of study: one is to acquire certain bodies of knowledge; the other is to acquire certain abilities to do things." This early observation contains the basic thrust of today's technical and vocational education through behavioral objectives.

Rivlin's work on study at the college level was also published in 1937, as was Edgar Eugene Robinson's work at Stanford University, in which he examined the results of independent study in the lower division, and a significantly higher GPA as the result of the independent studies.

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[2]Luella Cole and Jessie Mary Ferguson, Students' Guide to Efficient Study, Revised Edition, (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1935), p. 1.

Crawley, Frederick and Parr all wrote on efficient study methods in 1938. In 1940, Boyd Henry Bode analyzed the methods used to learn, and Horace T. Morse's book appeared, offering items to be used for the testing of the efficiency of study, which are still used today.

S. R. Laycock and D. H. Russell published a comparison of elements contained in thirty-eight manuals on "How to Study" in 1941, and the works of Wrenn and Larsen, Studying Effectively were completed at Stanford University to become a respected part of educational literature of that year.

Gagne's work with the military during the World War II years are classics, both in the field of statistical recording and empathetic conclusions which this author has had opportunity to see borne out in classes in technology covering two decades. S. L. Sharpe's article, "Effective Study Methods" was published in 1943, as was Harry M. Tiebout's emphasis of the "lazy student syndrome".

In 1945, Charles and Dorothy Bird joined forces for a revision of his earlier (1931) book. In Learning More by Effective Study, they conclude, "Success in mastering knowledge requires the practice of right principles in study periods."[3] The key word, "practice" is threaded through most

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[3]Charles and Dorothy Bird, Learning More by Effective Study (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1965), p. 108

of the cloth of contemporary writers on the subject of learning.

Margaret Elaine Bennett published a college-level book in 1946 which must have had a very personal attraction for students of that and following years, since it was devoted to self-discovery and direction by the student, as an adult, almost as if he were in a new world.

Gerken's book on effective study methods in 1947 was followed by another, on the college level, by Robert Wendell Frederick.

Improved techniques for studying in colleges were advanced in Edward Safford Jones' writings in 1949, wherein, after ten years of experimental student study work, he increased the chance for survival of freshmen from 25 or 30% to almost 50%, and in some cases, higher. His work contained an observation which many educators must share:

> "Those who have difficulty with their studies are likely to belong in one of two categories. Either they do not care enough about scholarship, or else they do not seem to know how to study in the most effective ways."[4]

In 1951, Howard E. Brown wrote an enumeration of study methods under the title, This is the Way to Study, which restated many of the steps advocated by his predecessors.

In 1953, Nathaniel Freeman Cantor published the

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[4]Edward Safford Jones, Improvement in Study Habits, (Buffalo: Foster & Stewart Pub. Corp., 1949), p. 7.

first of two books on the subject, the second following eight years later, in 1961. Also in 1953, Norris Ely Orchard in his highly motivating book on self-study, said:

> "Studying--learning--is an art and a skill. It is an art you must practice to become what you probably want to be, a college graduate."[5]

At least two books of merit on the subject of study came out in 1955. Howard E. Brown's This is the Way to Study, and Samuel Smith's Best Methods of Study both bring new information on study to light. For example, Smith's study of 320 seniors reveals that more than a third admitted they did not know how to study.

In 1956, William Howard Armstrong judiciously advised, regarding commencement, "From this point on your success will be measured largely by your ability to study."[6]

Nineteen fifty-seven was a banner year for books on the subject of study. Dudycha published a great little book, asking, "Are you just begging for wisdom, or are you willing to work for it?"[7] (A modern Aristotle?) Gunthrop

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[5]Norris Ely Orchard, Study Successfully, (New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1953), p. 1.

[6]William Howard Armstrong, Study is Hard Work, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1956), p. 4.

[7]George John Dudycha, Learn More With Less Effort, (New York: Harper Bros., 1951), p. 1.

came onto the scene with A Practical Guide to Efficient Study; a Detailed Description of What You Can Do to Make Learning Easier, which is a long title, but the book does contain all the elements usually used by other authors, but expressed in a unique manner, which makes it very worthwhile. Morgan's very good book, co-authored with James Deese, also hit the stands in 1957.

Perhaps most importantly, at least to one segment of the educational community, Virginia Voeks' book, On Becoming an Educated Person hit not only the bookstores in 1957 but also many of the libraries of teachers from kindergarten right up the ladder of education. She was destined to have later editions come out in the years to follow, but the kernel of her philosophy is all in the first edition. The six methods cited in her 1964 edition are included in each of the student documents originated by the practicum author for each of eleven courses in the field of Engineering Technology.

In addition to Cantor's second book, Dynamics of Learning in 1961, Francis Pleasant Robinson presented Effective Study that year, and Eugene Ehrlich published a noteworthy book, How to Study Better and Get Higher Marks. To the students attracted to his book, Ehrlich made many sound observations, such as "Companies that have their pick of college graduates set their sights on the top 10% of the class"[8], and

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[8]Eugene H. Ehrlich, How to Study Better and Get Higher Marks, (New York, Crowell Pub. Co., 1961), p. 2.

"The secret of efficiency is correct habits firmly fixed."[9]

Frances Pleasant Robinson's book, Effective Study appeared in 1961, with much of the same information as hitherto presented by other authors. In spite of this apparent drawback, the book is phrased in a manner which is sufficiently different from its predecessors so as to be thoroughly readable and informative.

Three authors on the subject of study are noteworthy for the year 1962. They are: Burkhart, Mace and Pauk. Burkhart's book is delightfully different from those mentioned thus far, and deserves special mention. Mace's, The Psychology of Study contains many gems of wisdom, but one is especially apropos to the whole business of higher education. He remarked, "...study is self-directed education."[10]

Pauk's How to Study in College is very similar to works by authors such as Carter, Bennett and Kornhauser but, like Francis P. Robinson's Effective Study, is not a tin-type of any other of the many books mentioned in this practicum.

Lester Donald Crow and Alice Crow came up with an easily read How to Study in 1963. That same year, Murray J. Mantell's significant contribution was published, of which

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[9]Ibid., p. 3.

[10]Cecil Alec Mace, The Psychology of Study, Rev. Edition (Hammondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1962), p. 7.

there is more to say under the heading of "significance".

Carter and McGinnis reported in 1965 that topping the list of causes contributing to the student's inability to do satisfactory college work was, "Poor study habits and inability to read."[11] In 1965, Gagné came out with The Conditions of Learning, which is a classic for the educator to read. Much has been said about Gagné regarding his investigations into psychological facts. A Skinner he is not, neither does he use Skinner's methods, but he does get to the crux of the problem, usually through his uncanny knowledge of the way plain people react under everyday conditions. A great man, and a great book.

A new approach was used in Harry C. Elliott's The Effective Student, a Constructive Method of Study, in 1966, in which his method is used to build a student who will gradually become both more effective and efficient as practice is maintained. That same year, Dorothy Wilcox Gilbert, in Study in Depth made an observation which is worthy of being remembered, especially by both two-and-four-year college educators. She said:

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[11]Homer L. Carter and Dorothy J. McGinnis, Building a Successful College Career (Dubuque, Iowa, M. C. Brown Co., 1965), p. 2.

> "In any permissive setting where initiative is encouraged and individuals are left largely to their own resources, planning is important. In higher education today it is essential." [12]

In 1967, Gladstein verbalized a thought which is the backbone of all of the books on study since Carman's work in 1900, when he authored Individualized Study; a New Approach to Succeeding in College. The concept of study which is tailored to a particular individual is followed, and although the concept is not really 'new', the title and the contents of the book are sufficiently attractive so as to be of high student-interest value.

Three authors stand out in writings on the subject of study during 1969. Roger S. Pepper presented a fine paper to the National Reading Conference in which he cites progress made by students whose admission credentials were barely acceptable. This paper makes interesting reading for those educators whose minds are closed to achievement for marginal students. Rickbaugh's contribution to the year's writing reported the results of a pilot study of an efficient study program. In addition to noting an increased grade point average of .50, of the students who indicated a desire to participate in the study, he reports that 59% did appear--a

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[12]Dorothy Wilcox Gilbert, Study in Depth, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1966), p. 1.

heartening figure to many readers.

Equally as noteworthy, Wayne H. Holtzman reported the use of both study habits and attitudes as predictors of academic success. This point had been alluded to, and in several instances circumspectly hinted in articles by other authors since Carman. It is precisely stated in Holtzman's work for the Encyclopedia of Educational Research.

In 1970, Ralph Gary and Howard L. Kingley collaborated on a book which corroborated the experiences of previous writers, and introduced several new factors regarding what learning actually is, and how it is accomplished.

Carman teamed up with W. Royce Adams in 1972 for a restatement of his thoughts of nearly three-quarters of a century earlier. The name, Study Skills, a Student's Chance for Survival is a far cry from his 1900 title, Study Skills, however the reader can pick out the philosophy which is uniquely Carman's.

In 1972, James J. Hinrichsen, of Vanderbilt University published the results of self-reported study behavior by undergraduates, in which it appears that individual reports may be a valid predictor in some cases of grade point achievement. Previous investigators have noted that self-reporting is often too unreliable as a yardstick for measurements of much except ego.

To conclude the progression of prominent authors on the subject of study since 1900, Goldfried published a most interesting study in 1973, which dealt with predicting future academic competence of students on the basis of their known study habits and attitudes. This paper, presented in the Journal of Educational Psychology, is an important breakthrough, if sufficient data can be collected for complete substantiation of the test results.

To summarize, the problem of inadequate study skills was recognized by 1900, and, in the seventy-four years which followed, empirical methods of observation resulted in both the enumeration of efficient methods for study and the use of achievement predictors based upon student use of the methods.

Yet, in this enlightened age, tests indicate the educational community does not require that all students learn how to study. Achievement is, therefore, below the students' capabilities under more efficient study conditions.

Significance. The statement of need for efficient, effective study habits among students in general, and college-level students in particular would be difficult to overstate.

Some dedicated educators at all levels of the structure of formal education are frustrated at the end of each grading period by the number of students whose accomplish-

ments must at that time be labeled "unsatisfactory", or something synonymous. Compared to the standards the institution chooses to call "satisfactory", these students have not measured up.

Repetition of the minimal label often raises the specters of "the failure syndrome", "low success index" and of watered-down courses with the instructor. The student reacts to the label by dropping out, with subsequent loss of job and/or income, and visions of incompetent instructors to trouble their sleep haunts the administrators.

In 1951 Thomas Staton wrote, "...Air Force Officers returning to academic studies after being out of school for several years. When a number of them requesting help were asked if they had forgotten how to study, almost every one replied, "No. I never learned"."[13]

The possibility that the same educational conditions which caused the Air Force Officers not to know how to study, in 1951 could very well be present today, twenty-three years later at College of the Mainland. That is, 'the system' may not have taught the students a basic educational fact-of-life, even after twelve years of public school in which to try.

The Educational Preparedness Survey was conducted

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[13]Thomas Felix Staton, How to Study, (Nashville: McQuiddy Pub. Co., 1951), preface.

at College of the Mainland to explore that possibility.

CHAPTER III.

PROCEDURES

Procedures. A careful investigation was initiated to determine the most appropriate method for obtaining the single piece of needed information. The decision was made to conceal the key question among several others, the answers to which would also be of value in the event of an anticipated follow-up study.

Virginia Voek's work was selected as the reference standard for effective study conditions.

The survey questionnaire which resulted from the investigation could be administered in any secondary or post-secondary educational institution, after appropriate changes to references to "C.O.M.", as College of the Mainland is known locally.

The Questionnaire is displayed in the Appendix.

The Dean of Instruction at the College was approached by the author of the practicum for approval to implement the survey on-campus, rather than relying on contact by mail, due to three factors. First, available time prior to the deadline for submission of the practicum report was extremely limited. Second, a considerable financial saving could be realized through elimination of the costs of two-way mailing. Third,

it was felt that students should be instructed in groups regarding the proper method of completing the survey in order to obtain a larger sample size.

Following examination of the survey by the Dean of Instruction, approval was given for implementation and the survey forms were distributed to the Dean for Academic Studies on July 3. Further distribution of the survey forms was made to the Academic instructors by the Academic Dean; the Academic instructors then instructed the students and released the forms. Upon completion of the forms by the students, the process was reversed, and the completed forms were returned to the practicum author by the Dean of Academic Studies. Following delivery of the survey forms to the Dean of Academic Studies, the Associate Dean of Industrial Education was approached for permission to implement the survey in that Division. Permission was received, and the practicum author was permitted to distribute the forms to instructors in the Industrial Education Division. The completed forms were returned to the practicum author's office by the instructors concerned.

The completed forms were then separated first by the sex of the respondents, then by the division in which the respondents declared their major field to originate. Surveys of students not declaring the division of their major were

given additional separation.

Statistical constants were determined in the straightforward manner suggested by George Simpson and Fritz Kafka, in their book Basic Statistics, although any accepted text on the subject of statistics would suffice. Descriptive statistical treatment was accorded questions number one, two and three for future inferences, however, only question number two was significant to this practicum report.

A complete report of the survey, in the form of a copy of the practicum report, was then delivered to the Dean of Instruction for his general information, and for consideration of the recommendations which conclude the report.

CHAPTER IV.

RESULTS

Results. The purpose of the survey was to determine the ratio which existed between the number of students who had been specifically trained in methods of effective study and the number of students who had not been so trained.

The results of the survey determined the ratio to be one student trained in effective study for 3.09 students not trained.

It was anticipated that a considerable segment of the College population had not been trained in effective study habits, but the ratio far exceeded that which was expected.

These results are illustrated on Table I.

CHAPTER V.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations. On the basis of the findings of the survey, the following recommendations were made to the Dean of Instruction, for his consideration.

I. The Summary of Responses and Results of the Educational Preparedness Survey of July 1974 be duplicated and distributed to each member of the Faculty and Staff of College of the Mainland for their information.

II. A special, optional non-credit experimental course in EFFECTIVE STUDY METHODS be designed and space and instructors be made available to an estimated 200 students during the third through the sixth, and eighth through eleventh class days of the Fall, 1974 semester, during each fifty-five minute period for which students are registered for a total of eight class hours for each section of the course.

III. Each student attending the first and second class days of the Fall, 1974 semester be asked questions number 2 and 3 of the Educational Preparedness Survey of July, 1974, and each student responding in the negative to question number two be given the option to attend the special optional, non-credit course.

IV. That records be maintained of the achievement of students attending the special class for comparison

with records of achievement of students who do not attend, to evaluate the effectiveness of the special course and the propriety of changing its duration to that of permanent.

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APPENDIX

Hi!

The name's not important, and I don't want yours -- just some honest information for some research work I'm doing that may help future COM students.

There's no connection between this survey and your status as a COM student -- COM has permitted me to make this inquiry because it will provide information not now available, and which may be helpful in providing better instruction for COM students.

Please answer the questions on this page and the back just as honestly as possible, and return the questionnaire to the person who gave it to you.

Thanks for your help.

EDUCATIONAL PREPAREDNESS SURVEY

1. Before your current enrollment, how many years has it been since you attended an educational institution for at least one full semester?_____years.

2. In your opinion, were you ever taught HOW TO STUDY EFFECTIVELY in specific terms?_____yes, _____no. If yes, where?

_____

3. Age_____Sex_____

4. The conditions listed below and on the back of this sheet have been suggested[1] as being favorable for effective studying. Please indicate (1) if you now agree (yes or no) with each condition now and (2) if you considered each to be favorable before attending COM.

HOW TO STUDY EFFECTIVELY

AGREE (yes or no)		
Now	Before	
		A. Where to study
____	____	1. Generally utilize one special place for study
____	____	2. Have everything you need for study at hand
____	____	3. Use sufficient and even lighting
____	____	4. Avoid considerable muscular relaxation
____	____	5. Study alone except when you need help
		B. When to Study
____	____	1. Materials reviewed just before going to bed are remembered better
____	____	2. Review immediately after class since this helps consolidate learning
____	____	3. Space study periods rather than studying for long continuous intervals
____	____	4. Stop studying when attention persistently wanders.

(CONTINUED ON BACK)

AGREE (yes or no)

Now	Before	
		C. How to Best Utilize Textbooks
___	___	1. Do not read texts as you would read a newspaper.
___	___	2. Think as you read--do not merely memorize or rehearse.
___	___	3. How often you read something is immaterial--how you read is crucial.
___	___	4. If you have reading difficulties consult the College Counseling Center (If one is available).
		D. How to Profit More Fully from Lectures
___	___	1. Sit near the front--especially in larger classes.
___	___	2. Take notes when necessary for an understanding of the material.
___	___	3. Make notes of everything that strikes you as rediculous or that conflicts with your present beliefs.
___	___	4. Record at least some of the details of the lecture, as well as the "general idea".
___	___	5. Jot down reminders of questions that occur to you during the class.
___	___	6. Review class notes daily and do not hesitate to ask for clafification of those concepts that are not clear to you.
		E. Possible Supplementary Aids
___	___	1. A few sessions with a teaching machine (if available) may aid in making a difficult portion of the course clear.
___	___	2. If a workbook accompanies the text, you will receive maximum benefit if you follow its instructions carefully.
___	___	3. Tutorial assistance is often available for an entire course or portions of the course.
		F. How to Prepare for Examinations
___	___	1. Do not attempt to cram the night before the test--it is more efficient to review rather than to re-read everything.
___	___	2. In reviewing try to recall chapter headings and subheadings.
___	___	3. Attempt to recite details under each subheading.
___	___	4. Keep track of what you omit and link these details to items you did not miss.
___	___	5. Ask yourself questions about each cahpter and answer as if the test were to be an essay exam.
___	___	6. Adequate sleep on the night before a test is of paramount importance.
___	___	7. Expect confidently that you will do well, and you will be more likely to do so, if you have followed the preceding suggestions for studying.

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[1]Voeks, Virginia F., On Becoming an Educated Person, (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1964), p. 275

TABLE I.

College of the Mainland
Educational Preparedness Survey (July, 1974)
Summary of Responses and Results

Group	Question #1 N*	A R*	Σ*	$\bar{X}$*	Question #2 N	YES	NO	Y:N*	Question #3 N	A R	Σ	$\bar{X}$
Academic Majors (Male)	84	0-18	102.25	1.22	93	22	71	1:3.23	92	17-52	1999	21.73
Academic Majors (Female)	111	0-33	156.5	1.41	119	38	81	1:2.13	118	17-51	2607	22.09
Tech/Voc Majors (Male)	35	0-35	208	5.94	44	8	36	1:4.50	45	19-52	1266	28.13
Tech/Voc Majors (Female)	53	0-20	174	3.28	55	12	43	1:3.58	55	17-50	1317	23.95
Undeclared Majors (Male)	38	0-28	490	3.49	42	7	36	1:5.14	42	18-44	1030	24.52
Undeclared Majors (Female)	43	0-20	83.5	1.94	43	10	33	1:3.30	43	18-60	1120	26.04
College Wide	364	0-35	1214.25	3.34	396	97	300	1:3.09	395	17-60	9339	23.64

Q #1: "Before your current enrollment, how many years has it been since you attended an educational institution for at least one full semester?"

Q #2: "In your opinion, were you ever taught HOW TO STUDY EFFECTIVELY in specific terms?"

Q #3: "Age"

*N: Number of Samples

*Σ: Summa

*Y:N: Ratio of "Yes" to "No" Answers

*A R: Apparent Range

* $\bar{X}$: Mean ($\Sigma fX/N$)

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